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Test Results of a New Snake Repellent

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When a new snake repellent came on the market, Dr. Ts Snake-A-Way, consisting of 7% naphthalene and 28% sulfur, we began to receive some inquiries as to its efficacy. To satisfy our own interest and that of potential consumers, we established a test protocol. The test room was 10 X 20 ft. in size with a 10 ft. ceiling and the floor was smooth concrete. As per label directions, a 12 inch wide band of the granular repellent was sprinkled on the floor in a center strip both lengthwise and crosswise in the room which divided the room into 4 clean, repellent free, areas. A snake seclusion box was placed in each of the quadrants and each snake was tested individually by releasing it in one of the quarter sections and monitoring its movements within the room.

In 1-hour tests of 12 naive gopher snakes *(Pituophis melanoleucus),* every snake crossed the 12 inch wide band of repellent at least once. Two snakes crossed 4 times and one 5 times within the hour. The average number of crossings for the twelve snakes was 2.7. Each of 2 western rattlesnakes *(Crotalus viridis)* were tested twice.. The smallest of the 2 did not cross the repellent in either test. The larger of the 2 rattlesnakes crossed the repellent band in both tests, once in the 1-hour test and twice in a test extended to 3 hours.

There was some indication in 2 instances (1 for each snake) that rattlesnakes did not like the odor, as they had sought the door recesses where they appeared to be positioned to obtain fresh air which entered from around the metal doors since the room had a slight negative air pressure. The crisscross bands of repellent in the room had a relatively strong smell of naphthalene and, to a much lesser extent, sulfur. Whether the small rattlesnake failed to cross the repellent band in both of its tests was the result of the repellent's potential or whether the snake was just not in an exploratory mood is uncertain.

The fact that one of two snakes crossed the repellent band placed on a smooth nonporous surface in each of its two tests suggests that reliance on this snake repellent to provide meaningful protection from snakes is unwise. The gopher snakes seemed totally undaunted by the repellent.